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ABSTRACT

This report describes the Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE) and its activities. WICHE was created to expand educational opportunities for citizens of the West and to provide educational programs, research, and policy analysis to augment the capabilities of the individual member states. Each state pays the same amount of dues to participate; in 2003-2004, dues will be $105,000. The WICHE student exchange program allows students to attend participating public and private colleges and universities outside their home state at reduced tuition levels. In 2001-2002, Washington sent about 1,500 students out-of-state while it received about 800 students. Fifteen western states currently participate in the compact. WICHE also performs policy studies, develops interstate initiatives to improve higher education, and convenes policy makers to address issues of concern to member states. This report contains details about WICHE exchange programs. (SLD)

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ED 476 435

Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

2001-02 Overview

January 2003

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Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education (WICHE)

Overview and Background

The Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education was created to expand educational opportunities for citizens of the West, and to provide educational programs, research and policy analysis that augment the capabilities of the individual member states. WICHE student exchange programs enable students to attend participating public and private colleges and universities outside their home states at reduced tuition levels. Each year, through these exchanges, Washington residents attend college in other Western states, while Washington schools enroll students from other states. The commission was created in 1950, through an interstate compact that was ratified in 1955 as RCW 28B.70. In 1974, the Washington Legislature in RCW 28B.80 designated the Higher Education Coordinating Board to coordinate the state's participation.

Fifteen western states currently participate in the compact (see accompanying list). Each state pays the same amount of dues to participate in the compact. The 2002-03 academic year dues of $103,000 will increase to $105,000 in 2003-04. The dues support the WICHE administrative structure to operate the student exchange programs. WICHE also performs policy studies, develops other interstate initiatives to improve higher education, and convenes policy-makers to address issues of concern to member states. Many WICHE projects are funded substantially by foundations and the federal government.

WICHE Member States 2002-03	
Alaska	New Mexico
Arizona	North Dakota
California	South Dakota
Colorado	Oregon
Hawaii	Utah
Idaho	Washington
Montana	Wyoming
Nevada	

The original exchange of students was initiated after World War II in response to the marked shortage of professional schools – and professionals – in the West. This shortage eventually led to the creation of the three student exchange programs. The first of the exchange programs, the Profession Student Exchange, was created in 1953.

WICHE Student Exchange Programs
• Professional Student Exchange Program (PSEP) • Western Regional Graduate Program (WRGP) • Western Undergraduate Exchange Program (WUE)

WICHE established an administrative structure to operate these programs, and a regional commission oversees them. Each state's governor appoints three commissioners to represent the state, subject to legislative confirmation. The Higher Education Coordinating Board's executive director, Marc Gaspard, Senator Don Carlson, and Washington's policy advisor for higher education, Debora Merle, serve as the Washington commissioners. WICHE commissioners approve state participation dues and student exchange program support fees; authorize studies of regional higher education issues; and provide oversight for the agency's administration.

- The **Professional Student Exchange Program** includes 13 professional fields of study. Participating states that do not offer these particular programs can enroll their students in the out-of-state schools that do have the programs. The student pays resident tuition (or reduced tuition in private institutions) and the sending states pay an additional "support fee" established by WICHE.

- The **Western Regional Graduate Program** includes designated graduate programs in all WICHE states expect California. To be included in WRGP, programs must undergo an extensive review intended to assure that they are distinctive and have demonstrated high quality. Students pay resident tuition.

- The **Western Undergraduate Exchange** includes a wide range of programs in two-year and four-year colleges and universities. States include programs in which they are prepared to enroll residents of other participating states at a tuition rate equal to 150 percent of resident tuition. Approximately 1,210 two-year and four-year institutions participate throughout the WICHE states.

States that participate in the Professional Student Exchange Program are required to pay "support fees" to the receiving institutions on behalf of each enrolled student. Such direct appropriations are not required for the Regional Graduate Program or the Western Undergraduate Exchange, in which institutions discount their tuition for participating students. When students are accepted into a WICHE exchange program, they generally agree to keep their designation as out-of-state residents during the entire academic program.

Member states may participate in some or all – or none – of the three exchange programs. By agreeing to participate in the Western Regional Graduate Program or the Western Undergraduate Exchange, a state agrees to be both a "receiving" and a "sending" state. For the most part, these exchanges are managed directly between the institutions and WICHE. Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) staff certifies student eligibility for Washington students going out-of-state in the Professional Student Exchange Program. RCW 28B.80.150 requires the HECB to coordinate state participation within the exchange programs, and RCW 28B.80.170 directs the HECB to periodically report to the Legislature about WICHE programs.

Benefits of WICHE Membership

WICHE membership offers Washington a variety of resources to develop higher education policy and to facilitate student exchanges, and provides other initiatives that foster interstate resource sharing. Investment in the Professional Student Exchange program has supported Washington students in professional programs not offered in the state and offers an incentive for them to return and practice here. The Regional Graduate Program and Western Undergraduate Exchange give Washington residents access to distinctive graduate and undergraduate programs offered in other states at tuition rates lower than they would normally pay as non-residents. And, when financially appropriate, and when space is available, Washington institutions can offer students from other member states relatively inexpensive educational opportunities – and possibly attract their interest for remaining in the state after graduation.

Across all the exchange programs, Washington as a whole sent about 1,500 students out-of-state in 2001-02, while it received about 800 students. In the Professional Student Exchange Program, the only exchange program requiring a state appropriation, Washington institutions received significantly more revenue in total than they sent to other states.

Washington's WICHE Appropriation – A Ten-Year History

Year	Appropriation	Dues	Support fee for PSEP	Number of PSEP Awards
1993-94	**$215,500**	$ 75,000	$136,800	19
1994-95	**215,500**	79,000	138,700	19
1995-96	**215,500**	79,000	135,600	15
1996-97	**215,500**	79,000	134,400	14
1997-98	**216,000**	81,000	113,200	10
1998-99	**220,000**	83,000	130,700	12
1999-00	**220,000**	85,000	134,100	13
2000-01	**225,000**	88,000	99,500	10
2001-02	**234,000**	99,000	142,800	13
2002-03	**240,000**	103,000	138,700	13

The state appropriation includes both dues and student support fees. The specific amount available for support fees is a function of what remains from the state appropriation after dues are paid. In 1993-94, 63 percent of the appropriation went to pay student support fees. However, WICHE dues have increased by 37 percent since 1993-94, and the cost to support each student in the Professional Student Exchange has increased significantly. As a result, the percentage of funding available for support fees has declined to 58 percent, and the state supports six fewer students in the PSEP today than it did in 1993-94.

PROFESSIONAL STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAM (PSEP)

This program allows students from member states to enroll at approximately in-state tuition rates (or reduced rates at private institutions) in specific professional programs generally not offered in their home states' public institutions. The student's state pays pre-determined support fees directly to the receiving institution, defraying the student's cost of tuition. These fees change annually. In Washington, these support fees are considered a conditional loan to the student, who must fulfill certain obligations in exchange. The support fees are generally designed to make up the difference between in- and out-of-state tuition. The WICHE Commission sets the fees based on a study of actual tuition rates in each of the recognized professional programs. Students receive assistance in the form of a partial tuition payment and a certain level of preference in admission. The amount of this support fee can vary by academic program, but all participating states use the same rate for each program as they send and receive students. Washington sends fewer students out-of-state than it accepts into the state.

Washington, a Sending State

Washington currently supports two professional programs not offered in the state, optometry and osteopathy. Support fees help qualified Washington students attend schools with these programs in other compact states. In this exchange program for 2001-02, Washington sent 13 students to other states. Washington public and private institutions received 100 students from other states during the same period. This is the only exchange program for which WICHE surveys students to generate comprehensive data about enrollment and program choices.

Programs Washington Supports in PSEP

- **Optometry**
- **Osteopathy**

When Washington entered the program in 1974, professional students received this support fee in the form of a grant. At that time, the only eligible program was optometry. The program was converted for all new recipients to a conditional loan program when WICHE added the higher-cost osteopathy program in January 1995. Washington is the only state that requires students to demonstrate financial need to receive the assistance. Four other states operate their tuition assistance programs as conditional loans: Arizona, Colorado, Nevada, and New Mexico. Alaska operates its tuition assistance program as a full loan program.

In Washington, students accepting the conditional loan agree to:

- Serve one year in a Washington-designated professional shortage area for each year of award, or a minimum of three years, whichever is greater; or
- Repay the entire amount of the award plus 8 percent interest within a five-year period if the entire service obligation is not met.

In 2001-02, Washington contributed $142,800 for 13 students to attend school out-of-state. Generally, over the length of the academic program, each student receives conditional loans between $30,000 and $68,000 in state support fees.

2001-02 PSEP Students Sent Out-of-State			
School	***Number of Students***	***Program***	***Cost***
Pacific University in Oregon	9	Optometry	$89,100
Southern California College of Optometry	1	Optometry	9,900
Arizona College of Osteopathy	2	Osteopath	29,200
Western University in California	1	Osteopath	14,600
Total	13		$142,800

Since 1974, a total of 196 Washington residents have participated in the program. A total of 165 students received state support as an outright grant. More recently, 31 students have received the support as a conditional loan.

Of the 31 conditional loan recipients:

- Thirteen remain in school
- Seven are practicing in the state
- Three are serving their medical residency
- Three are in their grace period
- Two are in the military and receiving deferment
- Two are repaying their loans
- One has repaid the loan in full.

When Washington's participation is measured by support fees appropriated and paid, it is the third lowest of the 13 Western states that participate in PSEP. The amount of participation ranges from Arizona at the high end, sending 178 students out-of-state with $2,934,700 in support fees, to Idaho at the low end, with eight students going out-of-state with $79,200 in support fees.

WICHE published in its 2001-02 Statistical Report an alumni chart of students who had completed their programs. Of those served, 128 Washington alumni were located. Eighty-seven (or 67 percent) reported practicing in Washington. The location survey being reported on was completed about five years ago.

Washington, a Receiving State

Washington is a net importer of students under this program. In 2001-02, while sending 13 students to other states at a cost of $142,800, the four participating schools in Washington enrolled 80 out-of-state students, in eight different professional program areas, and received over $1.2 million in support fees from other states.

2001-02 Washington's Receipt of PSEP Students

Schools	*Number of Students*	*Program*	*Fees Received*
Washington State University	42	Veterinary medicine	$896,790
	2	Pharmacy	10,600
University of Washington	8	Dentist	122,400
	6	Pharmacy	31,800
	4	Physical Therapy	18,900
	4	Occupational Therapy	43,200
	2	Physician Assist	13,300
	1	Public Health	3,733
Eastern Washington University	1	Physical Therapy	10,800
University of Puget Sound	7	Physical Therapy	56,700
	3	Occupational Therapy	35,100
Total	80		$1,243,323

The largest numbers of students attending Washington universities were from Hawaii (22), Montana (13), Arizona (13) and Utah (10). Washington public institutions ranked fourth among the 15 WICHE states in the amount of support fees collected. Colorado collected the most ($4,594,350) and Idaho the least ($5,300).

To further detail the process, if a student enrolled in a "Group A" program (medicine, dentistry, veterinary medicine, physical therapy, occupational therapy, optometry, podiatry, osteopathic medicine, or physician assistant), by state agreement the university would receive only the support fee to cover the nonresidential tuition differential. No additional amount above the resident tuition may be charged to the student. Because the support fee is standard across states, but includes institutions with potentially higher tuition rates, occasionally in a comparatively low tuition state, the amount of the support fee plus the student's payment of the resident fee amount may exceed the total non-resident tuition charge.

If a student's program is graduate library studies, pharmacy, public health, or architecture, it would fall into "Group B." Institutions accepting students in group B fields have the discretion to charge to the student any shortage of the nonresidential difference the WICHE support fee does not cover. This means the student may pay the resident tuition rate plus the amount of the nonresidential tuition charge that remains after the WICHE support fee has been applied.

WESTERN REGIONAL GRADUATE PROGRAM (WRGP)

Established in 1981, the Western Regional Graduate Program makes distinctive graduate programs available to students in WICHE states at a reasonable cost. Out-of-state students enrolling in WICHE-designated programs at public institutions pay tuition at resident rates. Students complete the regular admission process indicating in the application their request to participate in the Regional Graduate program. The student also contacts a designated person in the academic department. There is no requirement that students meet financial aid criteria, but they must fulfill all admissions requirements and deadlines of the institution.

Individual departments usually make admission decisions either on a rolling basis or an annual basis with the department normally determining a specific number of students to participate. The Regional Graduate Program designation remains with the student for the entire program as long as the student maintains satisfactory academic progress.

Institutions participate to publicize their programs and diversify their enrollments. Currently, only two public universities in Washington – Washington State University and Eastern Washington University – participate. The Regional Graduate Program operates directly between the institutions and the student. For example, the HECB has no direct role in certifying applications. However, the HECB staff sometimes helps other states verify an applicant's Washington residency. Washington has participated in the Regional Graduate Program since its inception.

Washington, a Sending State

In 2001-02, 62 Washington students were accepted in out-of-state graduate programs through the WRGP. There are no appropriated costs to the state for this program. When space is available, Washington residents have the opportunity to enroll in approved programs in other states at the resident tuition rate.

2001-02 Top States Attracting WRGP Washington Residents

- Oregon (18 students)
- Colorado (16)
- Arizona (15)
- Other states (13)

In Oregon, for example, the programs with the most enrollments were in the majors of oceanography, exercise/movement and marine resource management. Further details on enrollments by state, program and institution are available from WICHE. No alumni surveys have been done to calculate "return-to-state" rates because WICHE does not track individual students.

Washington, a Receiving State

Currently two institutions (Washington State University and Eastern Washington University) offer 10 graduate programs through the Regional Graduate Program. To be included, programs must meet the criteria of distinctiveness and quality. Institutions nominate their programs, and other peer graduate institutions in the West review the programs. The WICHE Student Exchange Program Advisory Council, a policy body that represents all participating states, approves new programs every two years.

2001-02 Washington's Western Regional Graduate Programs
Washington State University
American Studies
Archaeology
English, Emphasis in Rhetoric
Food Science
Health Policy and Administration
Neuroscience
Nutrition
Public History
Eastern Washington University
Creative Writing
Social Work, Rural Populations

In 2001-02, this program brought 63 students to Washington institutions. Most of the students came from Idaho (30). Programs in rural social work (28), public history (10), and archaeology (9) attracted the most students.

WESTERN UNDERGRADUATE EXCHANGE (WUE)

The Western Undergraduate Exchange allows students in participating states to enroll in designated two-year and four-year academic programs at public institutions in other participating states at reduced tuition rates. WUE students pay the regular in-state tuition plus 50 percent of that amount. This cost is substantially less than nonresident tuition.

In this decentralized program, students (usually freshmen or transfer students) locate a WUE-eligible school and apply for admission. The student marks the application to indicate he/she is seeking admission as a WUE student. Based on available space and in some cases academic standing, the institution decides whether to admit the student under the WUE program.

Occasionally, in the past, other states needed help from HECB staff to establish that students applying to them were Washington residents. On behalf of WICHE, the HECB staff annually sent out and collected a WICHE enrollment report that each participating school completed with information about the student's state of residence, the school he/she attended, and the program the student enrolled in. Beginning in the fall of 2002, this information is being obtained by WICHE via a Web-based enrollment reporting process. WUE liaisons at the participating institutions respond to the survey electronically, and the database automatically calculates enrollment by program, institutions, and state. The HECB staff will have electronic access to the report.

Washington, a Sending State

According to WICHE statistics 1,409 Washington residents enrolled through WUE in other states in 2001-02. Of these, 703 attended a two-year college. The states that attracted the largest number of Washington students included Oregon (303), Idaho (251), and Montana (205). In Oregon, for example, Washington students most frequently enrolled in music education, general studies, elementary education, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, marketing, accounting and architecture.

2001-02 WICHE States Receiving Washington Undergraduate Exchange Students

State	*# of Students*
Oregon	303
Idaho	251
Montana	205
Nevada	153
North Dakota	135
Hawaii	87
All Others	275
Total, 2001-02	**1,409**

No alumni surveys have been done to calculate "return-to-state" rates because, prior to 2002, WICHE did not track individual students in this program. WICHE believes the new automated enrollment system will facilitate gathering information on participating students if the receiving institutions are willing to provide the student data. Detailed enrollment reports by state, school, and program are available at the WICHE Web site: www.wiche.edu/sep.

Washington, a Receiving State

In the 2001-02 academic year, 651 students came to Washington, mainly from Alaska, California, Idaho, Oregon, Montana and Hawaii. The most popular programs were social sciences (78 students), biology (51), business management and administration (43), education (43), chemistry (43), and physical education (28). Other academic programs had fewer than 20 students enrolled. Most institutions accept students on a "space available" basis. A few institutions reserve some slots in their programs for highly qualified Western Undergraduate Exchange students.

Washington Institutions Receiving Out-of-State WUE Students in 2001-02

Schools	*Students*
Eastern Washington University	374
Washington State University	203
Central Washington University	68
The Evergreen State College	6
Total, 2001-02	**651**

OTHER WICHE INITIATIVES

WICHE Scholars is a fourth exchange program. The 2001-02 WICHE statistics indicate no students were reported to be participating in the program. The program was conceived as one in which any WICHE state could assist its residents at any degree level and in any field not covered by the other exchanges. To participate, states pay the difference between resident tuition (paid by the student) and the receiving institution's nonresident tuition.

WICHE has also recently published reports on tuition and fees, a regional fact book and policy indicators for higher education, and projections of high school graduates through 2012. In addition to the student exchange programs described here, WICHE is involved in the Western Cooperative for Educational Telecommunications, a Mental Health Program, CONAHEC (a tri-national consortium of North American countries); and the Western Policy Exchange. WICHE operates other services and programs too. A sampling of WICHE's other current programs includes:

- Western Consortium for Accelerated Learning
- Pathways to College Network
- The American TelEd Communications Alliance (a technology and telecommunications purchasing initiative.)
- Northwest Academic Forum
- Changing Direction: Integrating Higher Education Financial Aid and Financing Policy

WICHE projects and publications focus on current issues and concerns for Washington. They are often useful sources when a state is reviewing policy issues in an area of higher education, such as tuition. Conferences and workshops facilitate information exchange among states, helping state policymakers find appropriate solutions and avoid pitfalls that other states have encountered.

For more information contact:

Washington participation in WICHE: Bruce Botka, HECB, 360-753-7811
Professional Student Exchange Program: Linda Langan, HECB, 360-753-7861
WICHE staff contact: Sandy Jackson, 303-541-0214
WICHE Web site: www.wiche.edu

Statutory and Rules References:

RCW 28B.70	Western Regional Higher Education Compact
RCW 28B.80.150-170	Higher Education Coordinating Board Authority
WAC 250-28	Professional Student Exchange Program (Optometry and Osteopathy),
RCW 28B.70.050	Permission to exempt nonresident tuition fees differential.
RCW 28B.15.544	Permission to exempt nonresident fees in WUE for WSU, CWU and EWU.
RCW 28B.15.910(2)(u)	Indicates how waivers will be counted for receipt of state general funds.
RCW 28B.15.910(4)	Limit to waive for WUE within overall limits.
RCW 28B.15.915	Fully opened all public institution's waiver authority.

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